THE

EVIDENCE;

OR,

Religious and Moral Gazette.

RELIGION AND MORALITY ARE THE BASIS OF HUMAN FELICITY.

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From the Evangelical Magazine.

BIOGRAPHY.

The Rev. WILLIAM ROMAINE. A. M.

Late Rector of St. Andrew by the Wardrobe, and of St. Ann's Blackfriars, the Lecturer of St. Dunstan's in the West.

FROM the long standing and great reputation of Mr. Romaine in the Church of God, it is natural to suppose that our readers will be led to expect a biography of considerable length. We are sorry that the narrow limits of our publication, on the one hand, and his invariable regularity on the other, deprive us of the opportunity of being so copious as we could wish, and of embelishing this memoir with that variety which never fails to interest and gratify. We contemplate Mr. Romaine, not as a wandering comet, but as the majestic sun, who, while he diffuses unspeakable blessings, by pursuing an uniform course from day to day, affords less opportunity for novelty and speculation.

NAMES, in some instances, stamp celebrity on places, which would otherwise have remained obscure and unnoticed. This remark may not be inapplicable to Hartlepool, a small port on the coast of Durham, which gave birth to this very eminent member and minister of the established church. His father, a pious man, an encourager of gospel ministers, and an alderman of the above place, had two sons and three daughters, two of the latter of whom yet survive. His son William, the subject of this memoir, was born September 25th 1714, a year remarkable for the birth of several celebrated Divines,* raised up by providence to be the instruments of reviving evangelical preaching in this country, and particularly in the first establishment. He received the principles of his education at Houghton-le-spring, in the bishoprick of Durham, at the grammar-scholl, founded by that distinguished character, the Rev. Richard Gilpin, M. D. who for his great liberality, was called *the father of the poor*, and for his ministerial abilities, and indefatigable labours, *the Apostle of the North.*†

BEING perfected in all those branches of education taught in the school at Houghton, he was removed at Hertford college, Oxford, and afterwards to Corist-church in the same universty. Here the brill-

* *Mr. Hervey, Mr. Whitefield, and about fifteen months after, Mr. Berridge.*

† *Middleton's Biographia Britanica.*

iancy of his genius, a thirst for knowledge, and an aptutude to acquire it, soon recommended him to the respect and confidence of some of the brightest literary ornaments of his day. Indeed the desire of mental improvement had gained such an entire ascendency over him, as to render him inattentive to that decency of dress which generally distinguishes the clerical order. Passing by the apartments of the master of one of the colleges in his dishabille, a gentleman who was a visitant, asked, "What slovenly fellow is that with his stockings about his heels?" The master returned for answer, "That slovenly fellow, as you call him, is one of the greatest geniuses of the age, and is likely to be one of the greatest men in this kingdom.

Previous to an experimental acquaintance with the power of the gospel, he entered largely into the study of elocution, and sometimes attended the performances of the late Mr. Garrick, to improve himself in the graces of oratory. From the testimony of a dignitary of the established church, who compares him to Cicero, the prince of Roman orators, it appears, that he had made considerable proficiency in this science.

"*Nor Tully's eloquence forsake Romaine.*"

He was cotemporary at Oxford, with Messrs. Wesley, Hervey, Whitefield, and other pious young men; but it does not appear that he cultivated an acquaintance with them, or attended their devotional exercises. It may not be improper to observe, that there was at that time another description of students at the university, distinguished as admirers of the celebrated Hutchinson, who drank deeply into his philosophic and theological sentiments. This necessarily led them to a strict investigation of the Hebrew language, and the study of the Old Testament Scriptures. These were persons of a considerable share of learning and decency of morals, but strongly biassed in favor of high-church sentiments. Mr. Romaine, and several late dignitaries who have favored the religious world with ther literary productions, were of this number.

In October 1736, and in the 23d year of his age, he was ordained to a curacy in Devonshire, and from thence removed to Windleham, in Surry. He had not long entered upon the ministry, before he began to make his appearance in print. His first publication was a sermon in the year 1739, and the 25th of his age, before the university of Oxford, from Mark xii. 24, 27. in which the sentiments of Dr. Warburton, on the divine legation of Moses, are controverted. The next year he published a discourse from Judges xi. 30, 31. entitled "Jephtha's vow fulfilled. and his daughter not sacrificed; and in 1741 a sermon, preached at St. Paul's, before the lord mayor, from Romans ii. 14, 15. "On the imposibility of justification by the law of nature." In the subsequent year, from the same text, a discourse "On future rewards and punishments proved to be the sanctions of the Mosaic dispensation;" Though he had not, at that time, an intimate experience of the efficacy of the gospel, yet his acquaintance with Hutchinsonian sentiments naturally led him into clearer views of evangelical truth than most of the clergy then entertained.

From Windlesham he came to London, strongly intrenched in notions of his own exalted abilities,

and flattering himself that he required no other recommendation to a rapid preferment, in a city where talent was always admired and justly estimated: But God having intended to stain the pride of his nature, to make him acquainted with his own heart, and to confer on him the honor of reproach for the cross of Christ, disappointed all his sanguine expectations. It was his sovereign pleasure to make these mortifying dispensations subservient to the acquirement of that knowledge of the power of grace on his heart, so necessary to qualify him for those exalted services, which were always crowned with eminent success. To this circumstance he seems to refer in the following extract of a letter to an intimate friend:

"THE Holy Spirit will glorify nothing but Jesus. He will stain the pride of all greatness, and of all goodness, excepting what is derived from the fullness of the incarnate God.

"I KNOW one who learned this very slowly, but has had much pains taken with him; and to make what I have been saying more plain, I would illustrate it by his experience. He was a very, very vain proud youg man; knew almost every thing but himself, and therefore was mighty fond of himself. He met with many disappointments to his pride, which only made him prouder, till the Lord was pleased to let him see and feel the plague of his own heart. He tried every method that can be tried to give peace, but found none. In his despair of all things else, he betook himself to Jesus, and was most kindly received. He trusted in the word of promise, and experienced the sweetness of the promise. After this he went through various frames and trials, too many to mention."

WITH the legal workings of his heart under convictions, and with the methods by which the Holy Spirit led him into the liberty and fullness of the gospel of Jesus Christ, we have a circumstantial account in the following letter:

"I WAS in a sad taking about the account which I had sent you of myself, having never found any freedom to do it to any body living before; and I feared either it should be lost, or fall into any other person's hand. I am glad it is in your's. Now you know whereabouts I am, and what my present state is, it may be of some use to you to be informed how I was brought into it. God's dealings with me have been wonderful, not only for the royal sovereignty of his richest grace, but also for the manner of his teaching, on which I cannot look back without adoring my meek and lowly prophet. He would have all the honor, (and he well deserves it) of working out, and also of applying the glorious salvation.

"WHEN I was in trouble and soul-concern, he would not let me learn of man. I went every where to hear, but no body was suffered to speak of my case. The reason of this I could not tell then, but I know it now. The Arminian Methodists flocked about me, and courted my acquaintance, which became a great snare unto me. By their means I was brought into a difficulty which distressed me several years. I was made to believe that part of my title to salvation was to be inherent, something called holiness in myself, which the grace of God was to help me to; and I was to get it by watchfulness, prayer, fasting, hearing, reading, sacra-

ments, &c. so that, after much and long attendance in those means, I might be able to look inward, and be pleased with my own improvement, finding I was grown in grace, a great deal holier, and more deserving of heaven than I had been.

"I do not wonder that I received this doctrine. It was sweet food to a proud heart. I feasted on it; and to work I went. It was hard labour, and sad bondage, but the hopes of having something to glory in of mine own, kept up my spirits. I went on, day after day, striving, agonizing, (as they called it) but still I found myself not a bit better: I thought this was the fault, or that, which being amended, I should certainly succeed; and therefore set out afresh, but still came to the same place. No galley-slave worked harder, or to less purpose.—Sometimes I was quite discouraged, and ready to give all up; but the discovery of some supposed hindrance set me to work again. Then I would redouble my diligence, and exert all my strength. Still I got no ground. This made me often wonder; and still more, when I found at last, that I was going backward. Methought I grew worse. I saw more sin in myself, instead of more holiness, which made my bondage very hard, and my heart very heavy. The thing I wanted, the more I pursued it, flew farther and farther from me. I had no notion that this was divine teaching, and that God was delivering me from my mistake in this way; so that the discoveries of my growing worse were dreadful arguments against myself, until now and then a little light would break in, and show me something of the glory of Jesus: But it was a glimpse only—gone in a moment.

"As I saw more of my heart, and began to feel more of my corrupt nature, I got clearer views of gospel grace, and in proportion as I came to know myself, I advanced in the knowledge of Christ Jesus. But this was very slow work: the old leaven of self righteousness, new christened *holiness*, stuck close to me still, and made me a dull scholar in the school of Christ. But I kept on making a little progress: and I was forced to give up one thing and another, on which I had some dependance, I was left at last stript of all, and neither had, nor could see where I could have, aught to rest my hopes, that I could call my own. This made way for blessed views of Jesus. Being now led to very deep discoveries of my own legal heart, of the dishonor which I had put upon the saviour, of the despite I had done to the spirit of his grace, by resisting and perverting the workings of his love, these things humbled me. I became very vile in mine own eyes. I gave over striving; the pride of free will, the boast of mine own works, were laid low: And as SELF was debased, the Scriptures became an open book, and every page presented the saviour in new glory.

(To be continued.)

COMMUNICATION *for the* EVIDENCE.

TO CHILDREN AND YOUTH.

Remarks on a passage of Ancient History.

"ONE custom, which Herodotus tells us was established in Egypt, will not help us to judge favorably of their manners. At their meals and even at their parties of pleasure, the figure of death in wood, or, according to some authors, a dead

body, was introduced in a coffin, and presented to each of the company with these words, *Drink and rejoice, for to this complexion you will come at last.*"

Millot's Elements—Vol. 1.

To solemnize the mind with religious truth could not have been their object: for the exhibition was ill-timed and unsuitable for such an occasion. It seems, therefore, that they intended, either to treat the subject of death with levity, or rather, by such a representation, to encourage all to get what they could of pleasure while they lived, because life was short, death unavoidable, and a future existence uncertain.

PERHAPS this will help us to understand a passage in the writings of the Apostle Paul. 1 Cor. 15, 32. "If after the manner of men I have fought with beasts at Ephesus, what advantageth it me if the dead rise not? *let us eat and drink; for to-morrow we die.*" It is probable that, in this last clause, there is an allusion to that custom of the Egyptians, which might have prevailed, and certainly must have been well known among the Corinthians, and their heathen neighbors. The meaning of Paul may be this. All my sufferings and perils from wild beasts, or of beastly men, are of no avail "if there be no resurrection of the dead: for then is Christ not risen; and if he be not risen all my religion is vain: it is nothing but delusion in this world, and will utterly come to naught at the hour of death. *Let us do like the infidels of the age, who, expecting nothing in a future world, take their fill of pleasure in this.*

REFLECTIONS. How blessed is the hope of the Christian, when compared with the gloomy apprehensions of the unbeliever. Calm amidst the tumults of the world, resting on that gospel which he feels to be true; undisturbed at the approach of the pale and ghastly king of terrors; animated with the glorious prospect of surviving the ruins of dissolving nature, of shining brighter than the sun in heaven, and of being eternally with his loving and beloved Lord and master, whose smile is perfect blessedness; must not all be constrained to say that the Christian possesses a blessed and glorious hope? and though many wish to live like the unbeliever, will not all desire, with Balaam, to die the death of the righteous? For we may consider the forlorn hope of those who believe not the gospel. They are uneasy in life, startled at the thought of death, and afraid of an uncertain hereafter, an hereafter which they fear for its terrors, or dread as the annihilation of their being.

AGAIN. If we feel astonished to hear that any nation should think to increase their pleasure, by viewing the faces of the dead, how must we be shocked to see solemn funeral rites celebrated, in Christian lands, as though they were scenes of amusement, and the subject of death abused to the promotion of hilarity, and even of intemperance! Ought we not to keep ourselves between the extremes of Popish supersition, and heathen levity? While we feel the abomination of interceding for the dead, ought we not to feel the importance of affecting the minds of the living?

ONCE more. Let the youth consider what they must shortly become; and instead of being animated in their amusements by seeing their end, let them rather ask themselves whether they should not be very moderate in them, and be anx-

ious to prepare for the world to which they are so rapidly hastening.

Thomae a Kempis, "De Inferno." A translation.

QUESTION. Where do the ungodly go after death?

ANSWER. Into hell.

Q. What kind of place is hell?

A. Hell is a pit, dark and deep, full of burning sulphur.

Q. How do the ungodly spend their time in hell?

A. In weeping, and wailing, and gnashing of teeth.

Q. Will both their souls and bodies be tormented?

A. Yes. Both will be tormented at the same time, and in all ways.

Q. In what way will their bodies be tormented?

A. They will be involved in burning flames.

Q. How will their souls be tormented?

A. They will be tormented by a sense of the anger of God; by their own pride, obstinacy, malice, envy, anguish, want, fear, rage and desperation.

Q. Who will torment them?

A. They will torment one another; also devils and their own consciences will torment them?

Q. Will they never rest from torment?

A. They will never rest; no, never, either by day, or by night, or a single moment.

Q. How long will their misery endure?

A. For ever, and ever.

"De Coelo." A translation.

Q. Where do the godly go after death?

A. Into heaven.

Q. What kind of place is heaven?

A. Heaven is a place full of light and glory.

Q. How do the godly spend their time in heaven?

A. In joy and felicity, such as they can now neither desire nor imagine.

Q. Will they suffer nothing there?

A. Nothing. They will need nothing; they will feel no sorrow nor sin.

Q. What bodies will they have?

A. Bodies spiritual, swifter than lightning, more splendid than the sun.

Q. But what will constitute their highest felicity?

A. The enjoyment of God.

Q. How will they enjoy God?

A. They will know and love God, and behold him openly.

Q. How will they improve their time?

A. In singing the praises of God.

Q. How long will their happiness endure?

A. As long as God shall live, that is, to eternity. Lord grant me that felicity. Amen.

Of the Soul. A translation.

MY child, do you know what your soul is? You have in you, although you cannot see it, a soul,

which will never die. God hath made it, that he might dwell in it. If God live and dwell in your soul he will make it like himself. The soul which he inhabits, he will make good, wise, just, holy, and full of love. He will make it happy. For he desires that your soul should rejoice in him for ever. For this end he made you. When the soul desires and knows God, and enjoys him it is happy. But when the soul does not desire nor know God, then it is truly miserable.

A Friend of Youth.

"Keep your heart with all diligence, for out of it are the issues of life."

The government of the thoughts is one important part of keeping the heart. Those thoughts, which are to be avoided, were stated in a former number; let us now consider what thoughts are to be cherished. Whatever thoughts lead to religious knowledge, or tend to improve the heart and understanding, are to be carefully retained.

If we would have our minds furnished with proper thoughts, we must inure it to religious and moral subjects. The mind cannot be more nobly and usefully employed; for the object of religious knowledge is God, and the end eternal happiness; and the sincerity of a true religious principle, cannot be better known, than by the readiness with which the thoughts revert back to God.

Read your bible and let your thoughts dwell upon what you have read—remember you are to be judged by that book. O think much upon it, and order your conversation aright. Be extremely careful what books you read; your mind will naturally turn to the subject of your last reading. If that has been such as it should be, your mind will be rationally employed.

Be frequently lifting up your heart in ejaculatory prayer. If your hands are busily employed in your calling, the mind may be frequently at liberty to turn in on itself. Improve that time for self examination. Is this bargain fair? is this employment an honest calling? Should I dare die while busy at this work? Finally, whatsoever things are pure—whatsoever things are lovely and of good report. Think on these things, and the God of peace be with you.

Abridged from Mason.

NATIONAL AFFAIRS.

The succession of public events, of the most serious and important nature, which have rapidly occurred in a short time, almost bid defiance to the powers of the human intellect to record them with appropriate circumspection, and to risk even a prospective comment as to their probable consequence. we seem to be existing at a moment, when every day presents to our attentions some stupendous, foreign or domestic vicissitude; as if the Almighty was gradually and imperceptibly effecting a revolution in the whole political and moral world; arresting the contemplative mind to the sudden mutations and vicissitudes he is daily permitting to occur; new organizing the world, as it were, and dooming man but to be his partial instrument, who, active and foremost in the passing scences but yesterday, is to-day summoned for ever from all the phantoms that his

allusive and sublunary mind had been vainly speculating on. This is the lesson that such sudden and rapidly-connected catastrophes, and the still perturbed state in which Europe is left, fills the mind with profound contemplation, inasmuch indeed, that we may adopt the poetic description of the prophet: A day of darkness and of gloominess, a day of clouds and thick darkness, as the morning spread upon the mountains; the sun and the moon are darkened by them, and the stars withdraw their shining. It becomes us as men, to ponder upon events too impenetrable for human prediction, and to draw lessons of wisdom and experience from them.

SINCE the Jewish deputies at Paris have thought proper to covenant for the obedience and acquiescence of the rest of their brethren; among other means of conveying the particulars of their late meeting, and the approaching deliberations of the Sanhedrim, which was opened on the 20th inst. at Paris, it is in agitation to print several Hebrew newspapers, one of which has already made its appearance at Basle, in Switzerland.

THE number of Jews in the French dominions is estimated at one hundred thousand: these people have been for some years in possession of every civil right; several, it is said, are officers in the army, others fill the place of Judges, administrators, and municipal officers. In the department of Mont Tonnere one of them is mayor of his commune, in which he has, at the same time, proved himself a good financier and a good farmer.

THE emptiness of Talmudical tradition is now, almost everywhere, exclaimed against, because the Rabbins compare the Bible to water and the Talmud to wine!

THE idea of a Hebrew newspaper is not new; the Prussian Jews, about six years ago, published a journal in Hebrew, in which they attacked the reveries of the Talmud both with argument and ridicule; this paper is to be received at Dessau, in a new form, and to be called "The Shulamite; or, a Journal for the Diffusion of Knowledge among the Jews."

IN Holland a weekly paper has made its appearance, which is appropriated exclusively to dissertations, remarks, &c. upon the Bible, and is supported by a number of contributors and subscribers.

Gospel Magazine

ERRATUM.

IN our last number, last column, 13th line from the bottom, for *Williamstown, (Ms.)* 21, read *Williamstown, (Ms.)* 26.

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